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*PRESENT RELIGIOUS CONDITIONS IN GERMANY*¹

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In considering the present religious conditions and prospects in Germany, the main problem appears to be this: Can the church, which up to the eighteenth century had been the chief promoter and embodiment of culture, remain and be preserved over against a culture which has now become independent, or is this independent modern culture destined to sweep the church away? And if the latter be the case, what then will become of religion? This problem of the prospects of religion and church in the modern world has nowhere more significance than in Germany; for there, as nowhere else, an immensely rich and highly developed intellectual culture stands absolutely independent over against a strong and living church. Neither in France nor in England nor in America is the issue so burning as in Germany. In France secular culture faces no strong church filled with profound spiritual forces, but an outgrown institution governed by Roman spiritual tyranny; and therefore it has triumphed over the church. In England and America secular culture has not developed in opposition to the church, but is in the main friendly to it. In Germany, however, national culture since the eighteenth century has stood outside of the church and in a certain opposition to it; Goethe, who in his own person embodies our national culture, took a cool and unsympathetic attitude towards the church, and so have in a greater or less degree the other creators of our modern thought,—Kant and Schiller, the Darwinists and Karl Marx, the Naturalists and Nietzsche, the Liberals of 1848 and Bismarck. On the other hand the church made very great progress in the nineteenth century. German theologians—Schleiermacher, Strauss, Baur, Ritschl, Harnack—utilized for the church the best spirit-

¹ Two lectures delivered at the Harvard Summer School of Theology, July 12 and 13, 1909.

ual results of modern culture, and gave to German theology undisputed leadership in the Protestant world; piety in the church was profoundly deepened and enriched by Schleiermacher, Claus Harms, Löhe, Wichern, von Bodelschwing, Stöcker; while the external power of the church increased greatly in consequence of the restoration movement, the political leadership of the pious Hohenzollerns, and the establishment of a new and more democratic ecclesiastical constitution with synods and presbyteries.

Thus in Germany two strong and highly developed spiritual forces confront one another. Of course their mutual relation is not wholly one of conflict; the Protestant church knows very well that the best elements of modern culture are capable of rendering it service, and therefore tries to adopt them; and on the other hand secular culture, though developing independently of the church, cannot simply throw aside the religious educator of the people, for the representatives of culture feel that without religion culture would lose a great inner force, and that if the church were destroyed, their own chief means of access to the hearts of the people would be cut off. And yet there is a constant antagonism between the two forces; many representatives of the highest culture see in the church the main obstacle to a free development of modern civilization, and on the other hand there are in the church, particularly in the Catholic church, many who hold that Goethe is the chief enemy against which the church has to contend. This antagonism is not due merely to the backwardness of the church or the impiety of the cultured, but is a struggle between two principles, two philosophies. It can scarcely, therefore, be brought to an end in the near future, but will probably disturb the world for a long time to come. And yet the present time may be destined to bring the conclusion a good deal nearer, because both sides acknowledge more and more the necessity of such a conclusion, and many of the best men are consciously working to bring it about.

In the present discussion of the religious situation in Germany I shall first undertake to describe the German church and our institutional religion, then to consider the place of the church in the life of the German nation and the extent of its influence,

and finally to give an account of the antagonism between the church and modern German thought, with especial attention to those elements of modern culture which may be called religious, and which tend either to supplant the church or to make a reconciliation possible.

I

The German churches are established churches; and, unlike the churches of England, all German churches are established and national churches. In principle every German is by birth a member of a church, just as he is a citizen of a state. In 1871, when the German Empire was founded as a Union of states, the affairs of the church, like almost all affairs of culture, were left to the single states. Therefore each of the twenty-six German states has its own established church, and in Prussia even the provinces conquered in 1866 still have their own independent established churches. Luther had transferred the office of bishop to the sovereigns, so that they might govern the church by right not of authority but of love. Accordingly each state had one church, with a confession the same as that of the sovereign. That, however, could not last, for in the beginning of the nineteenth century Napoleon completely changed the boundaries of the German states, and moreover the freedom of migration brought about a mixture of the confessions. So it happens that today almost all the states have at least two established churches, one Protestant and one Catholic. The Protestant state-churches call themselves either Lutheran or Reformed (that is, Calvinistic) or United, and some states have both a Lutheran and a Reformed state-church. But these names mean very little, and in reality there is one Protestant and one Catholic denomination in Germany, while the special character of the single state-churches is not determined by the name of their confession, but by their history and traditions. Some churches are strictly Lutheran; in others, as for instance in Baden, Württemberg, and Hesse, the name of the denomination is almost completely forgotten, and only the Protestant and the Catholic church are known. All churches are ruled by consistories, appointed by the government of the state; besides

these consistories there are synods and presbyteries elected by the members of the churches. The consistories of all the Protestant established churches are united in the "German Evangelical Church Congress," which, however, has no executive power. Like the members of the consistories, so also the professors of the theological faculties are appointed by the governments of the states and not by the church. Accordingly, since every German minister (with the exception of the Catholics in a few states) must have graduated from a German university, the Protestant churches have no influence upon the education of their ministers. The independence of the single parishes is not very great; only a part of them are free to elect their ministers, while the order of the church, the number of services and the order of service, the texts of sermons, the religious instruction of the young, and the like, are all regulated, not by the single parishes or ministers, but by consistories and synods. The size of the parishes varies greatly, running from 300 to 100,000 members; in Berlin the parishes average 35,000 people, with four pastors to each parish, but within the last twenty years the need of more churches in such rapidly growing cities has been recognized on all sides, and much has been done to satisfy it.

The religious life in these churches and parishes is very different in the different states. It must be remembered that the great majority of the German people still live in the same state or even the same province where their ancestors have lived for generations. So, necessarily, local history and tradition plays a much greater part than in America; a great preacher or a pious sovereign or a religious movement may give to the piety of certain places its character for more than a hundred years. And yet we can say that the type of piety in all German churches has something in common; it is throughout a decidedly Lutheran type. Luther's confession at the Diet of Worms is the shortest expression of that which seems to the German Protestant the ideal of a Christian: courageous trust in God and a conscience free towards the world but bound by God. Luther's deep consciousness of sin and his pessimistic conception of human nature are characteristic for German piety and theology.

Luther's high appreciation of the Word of God determines the form of the German service of worship; German sermons are not free speeches loosely attached to a word from the Bible, but are primarily interpretations of the Word of God, direct applications of the Bible text. Luther's translation of the Bible lives in the memory of the German, Lutheran and Reformed alike; it has created for the Germans their religious language, even for the Catholics. Luther's catechism, or some other very similar to it, is learned by almost all Protestant children in the public schools, and together with the Bible stories forms the basis of all religious instruction. Luther's hatred of Roman servitude still unites German Protestantism; Luther's rich and deep family life is the pattern of the German home, above all of the home of the Protestant pastor. Except Bismarck there is no man who is revered with greater enthusiastic loyalty as the genuine German hero, even by those who have completely forsaken the church, than is that fearless, rough, and deeply pious founder of German Protestantism.

But Lutheranism not only means such a deep and free piety, it has also its faults. One of them is the lack of activity on the part of the laymen; the German church is much more than the church in America a church of pastors. That is, of course, largely due to the fact that the German churches are state-churches. Where the state takes the best care of everything, there individual activity always develops more slowly than where the state leaves all care of culture to private activity. The German is put to no trouble in order to become a member of the church, he is born a member. When the child comes to school, it receives religious instruction from two to twelve hours each week, from the first day up to the last class of the high-school. This is given at first by the teacher, later during at least two years by the pastor, who prepares the boy or girl for confirmation. Usually men of theological training also teach in the high-schools the Bible, church history, Christian theology, and ethics. The religious instruction is on the average very good, prepared according to the rules of modern pedagogics; all religious teachers are graduates from normal schools or divinity schools. Therefore one finds in Germany thousands of old men and women who still

know by heart Luther's catechism, many hymns, and hundreds of Bible verses; the preacher may assume that all his audience are well acquainted with the stories of the Bible.

But when the child has graduated from the high-school, and all religious compulsion has ceased, and participation in the life of the church has become voluntary, then the state's excellent care and Lutheranism show their defect. The layman, accustomed to having the state and the pastor do everything, is very hard to induce to take an active part in the life of the church. Even a large majority of those laymen who are deeply religious do not care for religious institutions. They want perhaps to be uplifted on Sunday by the Word of God, but they hold that apart from that religion should have its place in the heart and in the work of every day, in professional, business, and family life, and should not claim any special activity in a religious institution. This was Luther's view. He wanted the church only in order that it should teach the Word of God; all moral tasks were to be left to individuals or to the government of the Christian state. The Lutheran church has never had a Puritan Sabbath or Calvinistic church discipline or the Calvinistic ideal of a theocracy as in the Old Testament; it has never tried to exert a direct influence upon political life. That has all been regarded as Catholic formalism or Catholic aspiration after secular power. The church is to do nothing else than teach the Word of God through sermon and religious instruction to individuals, that they may have inner assurance of the forgiveness of sin and, as free and thankful children of God, may lead a Christian life in family, profession, and business. This Lutheran conception has given a great and fruitful power to the state governments, the states have assumed the promotion of all culture and civilization and have done wonderful work in all these directions. This Lutheran conception is also a main cause of the famous German conscientiousness in professional duty. In the eyes of the German people no gifts to the church could ever make up for the failure to maintain ethical standards in professional life.

Now this disregard for strong religious institutions as compared with piety of the heart and an honest life was well enough

so long as state and culture and public opinion were Christian, so long as Christian truth was generally considered as the only truth. But since the end of the eighteenth and especially since the middle of the nineteenth century that is no longer the case, and at the present day this disregard of the institutional church has become a great danger to religion. The modern state must be neutral towards all the different religious and philosophical views; art, social life, politics, public opinion, have developed their own values, an immensely rich literature and press, thousands of secular clubs and societies, bring those values to the people, who consequently do not feel the need of, and do not have the time for, seeking instruction in the church. But since the church has attracted its members by no other means than the sermon, more and more people after leaving school lose all contact with the church, and soon with all religion. This danger in Germany has long been recognized by the church, and, as pietism from the end of the seventeenth century gathered for specific religious activity small circles within the church, so during the last twenty or thirty years there has grown up among the ministers a strong movement which attempts to strengthen the church as a religious institution. More and more ministers and friends of the church begin to feel that our church, as it was up to the last decades, as a mere institution for preaching and teaching, is bound to die and to be dissolved into state and general culture. Prayer is performed in the closet, or in the small circle of kindred souls; instruction is sought from science and literature; public worship is supplanted by art; social wants are satisfied by many clubs; the care of the poor and sick is taken over by the state. If the church cannot offer something that no nation can dispense with, and that only the church can give, then it has no longer a place in modern life, it is a form which does not promote but hinders the religion of the heart.

This criticism and the splendid example of the churches in Calvinistic countries are leading many to a new ideal of the church. They believe that the church does possess such a unique and indispensable treasure, namely, religious nurture and education through fellowship and brotherhood. But if that be the task of the church in the future, then it must have a new

organization. It must no longer be a church of pastors, with parishes of 35,000 people, who can have no personal acquaintance with one another, but small parishes must be organized with definite common moral tasks and common education, with parish societies and meetings and activity, as these have long been established in Calvinistic countries. Many pastors in all parts of Germany have accepted with great enthusiasm this new ideal of the church, and have built up in hard struggle against the centuries-old customary passivity of the laymen a well-organized, rich, and vital parish life which will well bear comparison with that of the best American parishes, though the organization is very different. But in many places, especially in the country parishes, when no energetic minister has undertaken the new task, we still find almost the old state of things. And even where real parish life has been developed, the majority of those who have taken an active part have in most cases come from the middle class alone. This ideal cannot be completely realized so long as German churches are national and established, including as members believers and unbelievers, religious and irreligious.

There is another aspect to the problem. One of the best features of the German churches is that they contain all classes, that the educated and uneducated, the rich and the poor, are together in the same church, sit in the same pews, just as in our cities rich and poor live in the same streets, so that there are no slums and scarcely any exclusive quarters. Where the class spirit is so sharp and has such evil consequences as in Germany, the church must consider it one of its chief tasks to assemble all classes in the same church, and precisely the adherents of this new ideal of the church see in the reconciliation of classes an important part of the education through fellowship at which they aim. But on the other hand this diversity is the greatest obstacle to such a well-organized parish life. It is extremely difficult, even in the sermon, to speak at the same time to peasant-woman and professor, to employer and working-man; and it is still more difficult to keep these different people together in parish meetings, parish clubs, parish entertainments. The differences of class and education are so great in Germany

that the classes scarcely understand one another. They speak different languages, and therefore the new ideal of parish life can never be fully realized. Yet in a limited way it may be very valuable, and already in a thousand examples it has proved a fruitful means of reviving religion and church.

The most brilliant aspect of German church life is presented by the work of the Christian societies (*"christliche Vereine"*). This work shows that the provision made by the state for religious ends has not completely destroyed private initiative; for these thousands of Christian Societies, organized under a few great Associations, are, like the American Young Men's Christian Association, not immediately connected with the church. By far the largest is the so-called "Inner Mission," which Wichern started in 1848 by his inspiring address at the Church Congress in Wittenberg. In accordance with his programme this association today includes evangelization, Young Men's Christian Associations, Young Women's Christian Associations (both these have in Germany more local branches than in the United States and Canada together), care of the sick and infirm through 18,000 voluntary trained-nurses, care of the poor, the prisoners, the outcast, home missions, work against alcoholism and immorality, laborers' colonies, religious lectures to win the educated classes, influence upon the daily press, the publication of Christian literature, and, especially in the last decade, a national Christian labor-movement over against socialism. All this is organized, though very loosely, under one central committee of the Inner Mission, and the men and women working in these fields are trained in great Inner Mission schools.

Of the other great organizations may be mentioned the twenty-seven separate foreign missionary societies, and the two greatest and most popular religious leagues. These are the Gustav Adolf League with 2,000 local branches, ministering to Protestants living among Catholics, whether at home or abroad, but chiefly in Austria and South America; and the Evangelical League with 350,000 members, which aims to unite Protestantism and to protect its interests against the Roman church.

On the whole, it must be said that this work of the Christian

Associations, of which a hundred years ago almost nothing, and sixty years ago very little, was known, and which is carried on exclusively by persons friendly to the church, proves better than anything else that the church in Germany is not declining, but is a great living power with a strong hold upon the German nation.

The outlook is much less favorable when we pass from the practical religious life of the church to the theoretical, to the questions of doctrine. Here we come to the point where the unity and harmony of the Protestant church in Germany, so fruitful in practical coöperation, seems about to break down. The nineteenth century has introduced a marvellous change, and seems to have disproved the assumption of a continuous progress of humanity. In 1800 orthodoxy had almost disappeared in Germany; as far as there was any interest in religion at all, it was either rationalistic—a faith in natural religion, or pietistic—with a disregard of all doctrine. But after the wars against Napoleon came the great reactionary movement in politics and in the church as well, directed by very energetic and able men, and carried through by every means of persuasion and force. Pietism and orthodoxy, formerly enemies, now entered into a league against the common enemy, rationalism. It was indeed a revival of religion over against the indifference and superficiality of the eighteenth century, but at the same time it was a retrogression, which even today we have not yet made up. The old formulas and confessions of Lutheran orthodoxy were revived and forced upon the congregations by pastors and governments. After a hard struggle orthodoxy won the victory, and in 1850 rationalism was expelled from the pulpits and church governments. To be sure, in the circles of political liberalism, so far as they have not completely lost religion, there is still much of the old rationalism left; “God, righteousness, and immortality,” is still the summary of their creed. But the really religious circles, and above all those friendly to the church, are for the most part orthodox. The best church-attendants and the most loyal workers in the Christian societies are all of the orthodox pietistic type; here we find real Christian life, intimate knowledge of the Bible, readiness to give, and courage to confess.

On the other hand the universities teach a theology which has gone far away from the old formulas. At the time of the restoration there were many able orthodox professors in the theological faculties—Hofmann, Frank, Philippi, Thomasius, Beck—and the majority of the pastors of today have accepted their theology; but on the whole, German theology in the nineteenth century has never ceased to be influenced by Schleiermacher, the great liberal theologian, and today there is no professor in any German university who would hold to the Lutheran formulas of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Even the leaders of the so-called positive theology—Seeberg, Grützmacher, Theodor Kaftan—assert the necessity of a “modern positive theology,” or a “modern theology of the old faith,” and teach the old truth in new forms. But they constitute only a minority in the universities; the majority, and in particular the most able men, are completely on the liberal side, and have influenced many, chiefly of the younger pastors.

At present there may be distinguished four more or less organized parties in the German churches. First stand the genuine Liberals, the “*Protestantenverein*,” corresponding perhaps to Unitarianism in America. They started their organization in the sixties, and are mostly followers of Hegel, or perhaps also of the old rationalism; and they attempt to reconcile Christianity and modern culture in a higher, rational religion, earnestly contending against the restoration and orthodoxy. This party has decreased very much during the last twenty-five years, but at present is again increasing.

The second party are “the friends of the *Christliche Welt*” (a religious weekly bearing that title) who, once under the leadership of Ritschl, have won the majority of the professors and a great number of the ministers, including a large part also of those who formerly belonged to the *Protestantenverein*. They hold firmly to the established churches and to their history, but they stand before everything else for absolute freedom of theological scholarship, and for full personal freedom for ministers in thought and teaching. They think it possible for conservative and modern theology to live and work together in the unity of the Spirit in one church. This party admits every type

of theology, but in reality almost all "*Freunde der Christlichen Welt*" are liberals.

The third party is the "middle party," or "*Evangelische Vereinigung*." They stand for moderate progress, to be attained by the equipment and organization of the present churches. And, finally, the fourth party is the "Positive Union," or orthodox party, the smallest among the professors, the largest among the ministers. The great majority of the laymen who are friendly to the church, and consequently the majority in the synods and in the Christian societies, stand on this orthodox side.

It is easy to see that such a state of things gives rise to serious complications. The fact that a majority of the professors and of the younger pastors are liberal, gives rise to grave distrust among religious laymen, who try to prevent the ministers from working in the Christian societies, and denounce them before the consistories. So arise the continual heresy-trials which so much hurt the life of the German churches. Most of the consistories are broad and tolerant, willing to grant freedom of thought to the ministers, and anxious to avoid the condemnation of a pastor on account of heresy; but it would require more than human wisdom to avoid oppressing freedom of thought without, on the other hand, alienating the best and most religious members from the church by openly favoring modern theology. The situation for the ministers is indeed difficult. If they avoid all doctrinal preaching and teaching, as most of them do, they risk the accusation of insincerity, and it is one of the most discouraging aspects of the situation that so large a part of the people, church-attendants as well as non-attendants, are of the opinion that ministers do not believe what they preach. Yet if the ministers, for full sincerity, tell the people the results of modern theology, they repel the best members of their churches and induce them to go to the sects, besides running the risk of a heresy-trial, always harmful to the church.

In spite, however, of the disinclination for theological polemic and enlightenment, professors and ministers are coming to the decision that it is best to make known to the people the results of modern historical criticism, not from the pulpit but in public

addresses, popular literature, and religious magazines. The gulf between university and church would become broader and broader, and would lead to a fatal division, if such work of enlightenment were avoided. So a great popular theological literature has sprung up; the *Christliche Welt*, which is probably the best Christian magazine in the world, the *Religionsgeschichtliche Volksbücher*, *Lebensfragen*, *Religionsgeschichtlicher Commentar* to the New Testament—all of the highest scientific quality—are designed chiefly for laymen. In the cities public lectures are instituted for the educated, to discuss modern theological questions; these are not directly connected with the church, and intentionally avoid an ecclesiastical tone. But the more this work is done, although with the greatest caution, the sharper becomes the antagonism between scientific theologians and the pietistic conservative part of the laity. One is sometimes inclined to believe that at the very time when in America the separate denominations are tending to draw nearer together, in Germany the one church is destined to be divided. However, the German church has passed through several such crises; in fact the theological struggle has never stopped since the time of the Reformation; and we may hope that this present crisis will not dissolve the unity of the church, as long as the church can remain a state institution.

But the unity of the Protestant church in Germany is disturbed by another danger, namely, the influence of the English and American denominations. I have thus far spoken only of established churches, that is to say national churches to which their members do not belong through an act of joining them, but into which they are born. But this principle is no longer fully maintained. For sixty years there have been in Germany more and more persons who do not belong to the established churches. Their absolute number is still so small that in a general summary they might be omitted. To the established churches belong 99½ per cent of the German population, only ½ per cent are outside the national church. Of these ½ per cent about one-third have left any church, while two-thirds, that is to say 200,000 people, belong to free churches, or, as we call them, sects. A small part of these are of German origin, as,

for instance, the Free Church Lutherans in Prussia, who left the established church when the Lutheran and Reformed churches were united. Almost all the other sects have come from Great Britain or America—Methodists, Baptists, Irvingites (“Catholic Apostolic Church”), Adventists, Christian Scientists, Mormons, Darbyites, etc. They create a decidedly foreign element in German church life, chiefly on account of their evangelistic preaching, their emphasis each upon some rather subordinate point of doctrine or constitution, and their rejection of all modern culture, art, science, and literature. Although they have thus far won only uneducated people, we cannot help regretting their work in Germany, for these sects come over from England and America as if missionaries to the heathen, while in reality not the unchurched, but only church-attendants, chiefly pietists, are withdrawn by their work from the established churches. Their chief means of propagandism are the objections against the institution of state-churches, as containing good and bad, believers and unbelievers, and as even having “unbelievers,” that is to say modern theologians, as ministers. Since all this is regretted by many religious people, it is not difficult for the sects to win by these arguments some of the less educated, but very devout, church-attendants. On the other hand, their methods, especially the extravagant evangelistic methods which are so foreign to the German philosophical and thoughtful mind, tend to estrange the educated classes from all religion.

It is, therefore, not surprising that the relations between the church, and especially the ministers, and the sects are strained. The enthusiastic minister in an established church has difficulties enough with the multitude of the indifferent, and he must doubly regret to find himself confronted with an earnest opposition to his work among the very best members of the churches. Since the seventeenth century the German church has always had separate pietistic circles within it, but these pietists have been, and for the most part are still, quiet persons, who attend church regularly and help the pastors, while in addition they maintain their own separate meetings for Bible-study and prayer. In the last decade, however, through the influence of the Evangelical Alliance, founded at Liverpool and supported

in Germany by the sects and by many pietists, there has grown up in some pietistic circles an aggressive attitude, unfriendly to the state-church, which has led to deplorable excesses. The sects will undoubtedly increase, because the essential irrationality of every established church fosters sectarian propagandism; and although we regret their progress, we may yet be glad that their competition forces the established church to greater and more intensive care of the religious life of its members.

Far sharper than the antagonism felt toward the sects is the hostility of German Protestants to the Roman church. One can say that the opposition to Rome is the single point in which all Protestants, friends of the church and indifferents, conservatives and liberals, are united. The two societies founded to protect Protestant interests against Romanism, the Gustav Adolf League and the Evangelical League, are the most popular of all religious societies, and many secular societies have as one of their aims to help in the struggle against Romanism. To be sure, at the meetings of Catholics and Protestants, and on all possible occasions, there is much talk about peace between the confessions, because most Germans feel that this confessional antagonism is disastrous to Germany; yet the situation is at present as far removed from peace as ever. It cannot be said that the Protestant religion in Germany is endangered by Rome, for in only two states are the Catholics in a majority, and in the whole empire only 35 per cent are Catholics, while the changes from Catholicism to Protestantism are more numerous than the losses of the Protestant established churches, and are constantly increasing. In the German-speaking part of Austria 65,000 people have left the Roman church within the last ten years.

But even if there is no danger from Rome to the Protestant religion, Rome yet does everything possible to disturb the peace in Germany. The "Centre," or Catholic party, which forms the largest part in the Reichstag, holds the balance of power, there, and its policy regards the wishes of Rome more than the welfare of the German nation. Through the confessional, the Catholics are hindered from joining any liberal party; art and science are branded and oppressed, the Syllabus of 1864 condemns the foundations of all modern culture as impious errors,

and rejects freedom of conscience and toleration; and these principles, more and more pervade the Catholic clergy. Luther, the greatest of heroes in the eyes of the majority of Germans, is insulted in the Catholic press and schools as the greatest of criminals. Mixed marriages, and all conditions in which Protestants and Catholics are living together, are continually disturbed by the fanatical interference of the Catholic priests, especially those of the younger generation. The intolerance of Rome is constantly increasing; since the new Encyclical of 1907 all reform in Catholicism is bound to fail; Rome knows no other alternative but recantation or excommunication. Among the German Catholics there is much genuine piety and sincere patriotism, but they are completely powerless so long as Rome's jesuitical spirit is dominant in their church; and therefore if Protestants should co-operate with pious and patriotic Catholics they would only strengthen the power of jesuitical Rome. How this increasing antagonism, which divides and hampers Germany in almost all questions of inner politics, science, art, and social work, is to develop and to be overcome, it is impossible to know. We can only say that the power of the Roman church in Germany has marvellously increased within the last hundred years, and that at the same time the Catholic church in Germany has increasingly retrograded in its inner life. Reason has been banished more and more, jesuitical formalism, casuistical morality, ultramontanistic striving for political power, superstitious cults, have more and more repressed the sound religious forces in German Catholicism. Without a radical revolution in the Roman church there can be no hope for a solution of the disastrous antagonism between the two confessions.

A few words must be added about the relation between state and church, and the future of the established church in Germany.

Since the time when Schleiermacher in his romantic enthusiasm declared the union of state and church to be intolerable, the question of separation has never ceased in Germany, and it is much discussed today. Separation of state and church was most in favor in 1848, when the reactionary ecclesiastical politics of the Prussian government estranged the liberals and the working-

men from the church, and the Frankfort Parliament announced separation of state and church as a fundamental principle. Today no parliament in any state would do that; universal separation is not to be expected in the near future. In some states, it is true, the church is almost completely independent, but nowhere is it really a free church. Freedom of conscience and the right to withdraw from the church and to establish a free church is everywhere granted, and so long as only one-half per cent of the whole population are outside of the established churches and most of these send their children to receive religious instruction in the public schools, one can scarcely say that the existence of a state-church creates an unjust discrimination in favor of one part of the population; any more than one could say that about the government support of theatres or art. The sects have distinctly failed to appeal to the people at large, and especially to the educated. The vast majority of the persons opposed to the state-church are much more opposed to the free churches.

The political reasons why no parliament today attacks the question of separation are various. The old liberal conception of the state as merely the protector of law and order, and of the free development of the individual, is completely gone in Germany; the German states, by their traditions and historical development, have taken into their hands all the tasks of culture, provision for education, health, science, art, industry, agriculture, the care of the sick, the poor, and the old, schools, post-offices, railroads, banks. But if the government so promotes all culture, shall it leave the most important part of it, religion, to individuals? Moreover, the matter is closely bound up with education. Shall the state, which selects with greatest care all other professors in the universities, leave the selection of the theological professors to the church, in spite of the fact that the education of the whole people depends so largely upon the quality of the pastors? Shall it tolerate the possibility that the most important part of education, the religious education of the children, may be given in a manner directly opposed to modern German culture and to the interests of the state itself? But this is what the Catholic church, even now, though itself

under state supervision, always tries to do. And a further political motive lies in the dread of an independent church. In France today there are many indications that the free Catholic church, although severely restricted by the Laws of Separation, will engender grave complications for the republic. So interest for German culture and for the education of the people, and fear of the power of an independent, unsupervised church, combine to make our governments and parliaments averse to the separation of state and church.

If we consider the question from the point of view of the church, we reach the same result. To be sure, much harm has come to the Protestant church through its connection with the state—from the ecclesiastical partisanship of autocratic sovereigns, from red tape and bureaucracy, from the necessary regard of the state for Rome; but on the other hand the German people by long tradition are so accustomed to have the state care for everything that a free church could be maintained only with serious difficulty. In the state of Oldenburg separation was once accomplished, but after four years there were so many financial difficulties, so many parties and quarrels arose, that the church asked the state to take it again under its care. The religious life of the people would suffer great harm, if religious instruction, which thus far has reached all children, should be banished from the public schools and from public institutions. Furthermore, a division between Conservatives and Liberals would be inevitable in the free church, and that would break up practical co-operation in the religious societies, and would give to the Roman church a very dangerous superiority. Liberal religion would have great disadvantages, because the majority of the religious laymen would go to the orthodox side, and would not tolerate liberal professors in their universities. The state is the best protector of freedom within the church; the synods as well as the free churches in Germany are mostly narrow and intolerant. The main objection raised against the state-church, that it necessarily contains good and bad, believers and unbelievers, cannot be considered valid, and contradicts the Lutheran idea of the church. Luther denied that a visible church could ever separate good from bad, believers from unbelievers,

converted from unconverted. If it does so, if the visible church undertakes to be a communion of saints, it must always apply a very external test of sainthood. Those who wish to see the church a separated body of the converted, such as our sects claim to be, follow in this respect what seems to us an unchristian individualistic principle. The task of the church is to be the salt of the earth, to educate all people for the Kingdom of God, not merely to uplift a few segregated converted Christians. The question of separation is one of practical advantage, not of principle, and, as we have seen, the state and the church alike have at present many good reasons for maintaining the union.

II

We have seen that the church in Germany has undoubtedly grown stronger during the last century, the Catholic church stronger chiefly in external power, the Protestant in respect to internal efficiency. One hundred years ago there did not exist in all Germany anything like a parish life, or vitally interested congregations, excepting in some pietistic circles; the Protestant church was almost exclusively an institution for preaching and teaching, and the preaching was mostly shallow rationalism. No important theologian was to be found in Germany during the eighteenth century.

Today we find a rich, well-organized, and busy life in many congregations; the work of home and foreign missions grows year by year, as does the willingness to give; sermons have become fresher and more appropriate to the modern world; the religious instruction of the young has made great progress, chiefly within the last ten years, and is undoubtedly better than that of any other country; in many great cities more churches have been built within the last thirty years than during the previous two centuries, and they are often splendid works of modern art. Theology, with men like Harnack, Herrmann, Seeberg, Troeltsch, Loofs, takes its fully acknowledged place in the universities; the results of modern research in theology are disseminated by the church more and more widely among the people; and evangelical work is carried on with greater

zeal than ever before among educated and uneducated. Certainly, we can say that the intensive power of the church is growing, that the church exerts a deeper influence upon the lives of its friends than was the case one hundred, or even twenty, years ago.

Much more difficult is it to decide whether the extensive influence of the church is growing or declining. We may distinguish in Germany four sections of the people, possessing about the same numerical strength, and representing four different philosophies, ideals, cultures: first, the conservatives; secondly, the liberals; thirdly, the ultramontanes (Romanists); fourthly, the socialists, or social-democrats. Three of these sections take a fairly distinct and uniform attitude towards the church. The conservatives are friends of the Protestant church, the ultramontanes are strict Catholics, the social-democrats reject all church and religion. Not quite so clear is the attitude of the liberal section; yet we may say that a majority of the liberals are either indifferent or hostile to the church, although perhaps not so to religion. Considering the statistics of these four groups, we find that of the whole German population about 35 per cent take a friendly attitude to the Protestant church, about 25 per cent to the Catholic church, and that about 40 per cent are completely indifferent or hostile to all churches. These proportions are reckoned by noting the number of votes cast in 1907 in the last election to the Reichstag; they show the political attitude of the men alone, and hence are not an adequate index of the attitude of the whole population. Yet we are probably not far from the truth, for in Germany the political parties do not merely represent different practical principles, but different philosophies, ideals, views of life; one might almost say that the political parties differ from one another as much in their views about religion and science and art as about politics. That is, indeed, a sign of the depth of German culture, which pervades the whole of a man's life; but it is a great calamity that the different groups of the German population have almost nothing in common. We have no Washington and Lincoln and Longfellow, whom the whole nation honors; those heroes who are worshipped with enthu-

siasm by one part of the people, like Luther or Goethe or Bismarck or Lassalle, are for another part objects of fanatical hatred or at least of great offence.

But we should have too favorable an impression of the conditions of the church in Germany if we regarded merely the fact that about sixty per cent of the population are friendly to the church. For although this sixty per cent may be willing to grant the means necessary for maintaining the churches and to send their children to religious instruction, yet only perhaps half of them attend church. The average attendance at the Lord's Supper is in Prussia thirty-seven per cent of the Protestant population, in one state ninety per cent, in Hamburg only eight per cent. Furthermore, we must consider that just among those who create public opinion, the authors and journalists, the majority are unfriendly to the church. If we look into German papers, magazines, or books, we find amazingly little real sympathy with the church, but much hatred and scorn. The situation in this respect is quite other than it is in America. In large circles it is a matter of good form to disparage the church. In many public questions of morality, or politics, or social reform, any interference by the church only does harm, because a great part of the men who influence public opinion oppose on principle policies which the church supports. It would be too much to say that ten per cent of the educated Protestant men are regular church-attendants. This is not surprising. The boy in school is first taught to love the Christian religion, the Bible, the church; later he becomes acquainted with the rich sources of modern German culture, he reads Lessing, Schiller, Goethe, Kant, and discovers that these and other men whom he is taught to revere as teachers of highest wisdom, were indifferent or opposed to the church. And so, although he may still believe, as did most of those heroes, that the Christian religion is the highest element in our civilization, yet he comes to think that the church is of no benefit to him. The sermon which must be adapted to uneducated listeners does not seem to offer anything to him, while the orthodoxy of many preachers repels him, and the caution of the liberals makes him distrust their sincerity. That the church has other purposes besides preach-

ing, that it should cultivate Christian fellowship, is an idea too new to attract him, and in any case the fellowship in one congregation of educated and uneducated, of the different classes, seems to him impossible. Hence many an educated person takes no part in the life of the church, although he may be willing to support it, and may let his children be baptized and taught the Christian religion. And all this is on the supposition that he does not become one of that great number of educated men, chiefly among the liberals, who consider not only the church, but also the Christian religion, to be old-fashioned and outgrown.

Is this unfriendliness to the church growing or declining? That is difficult to say. If we consider statistics, we might be forced to say that the estrangement from the church is growing, for the peasant and middle classes, whose members are the best church-attendants, do not grow in numbers, while the industrial class, and therefore the social-democrats, are increasing rapidly. The peasants move to the cities, and there become social-democrats and so hostile to the church. But over against this growing estrangement stands the certainty that the public influence of the church is actually increasing. Thirty years ago the conservative press took no notice of the church, and the liberal press attacked it bitterly. Today, through a change which has come about chiefly in the last decade, the conservative press openly defends and favors the Protestant church, and a large part of the liberal press has given up its blind hatred. Only the socialist press and some radical liberal papers maintain the old hostility. The old liberalism of the middle of the nineteenth century is everywhere dying out, and the new liberalism is very different, as in other matters so in its attitude to the church. Twenty years ago the church had not a single friend among the liberal members of the Reichstag, today two of the leaders of the liberal party in the Reichstag are former Protestant pastors. Since in Germany never numbers, but only quality, is decisive, it would not be just to say that the influence of the church is declining. Rather is it true that the position of the church is more satisfactory today than it has been at any time within the last sixty years. And, at any rate among church-

attendants, the number of persons to whom religion is an affair of personal moral decision is much greater than has been the case for a long time past. It is true, the number of persons abandoning the church-membership, although still very small (only one-sixth per cent), is increasing, and will probably continue to do so; but this cannot be regretted; on the contrary, it is the most hopeful sign of the present situation, for it shows that the old fatal indifference is disappearing, and that men are beginning to decide positively for or against the church.

What, now, is the present outlook for religion and Christianity in the four sections of the German population? Of the first two groups, the conservatives and the ultramontanes, I have already spoken. Conservative principles and philosophy are found in the nobility, in one part of the middle class, and above all among the peasants. All these classes are at the same time the best members of the Protestant church. Among the nobility and in some sections of the middle class the principle, "Throne and Altar together against Revolution," has still a strong hold. The peasants have come so little in touch with modern culture that they have no difficulties in believing the old orthodox formulas. We find among them much genuine piety and deep loyalty to the church, but since the majority of them are far behind the knowledge and ideals of the present age, their attitude can scarcely decide the future of religion in Germany. If the church remains as it has been up to the present, primarily a church of the conservatives, its influence on the life of the nation must decrease more and more.

The second group, the ultramontanes, is even more reactionary and backward in its philosophy than are the Protestant conservatives. Ultramontanism still follows the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas and the superstition of the Middle Ages. One hundred years ago its death was prophesied, but history has shown that Rome's power is immeasurable and is able to force mediaeval culture upon the twentieth century. Ultramontanism presents the most hopeless problem in Germany, chiefly because Germans can contribute nothing towards it, but must wait as passive spectators to see how Rome itself shall develop.

Of the social-democrats more remains to be said. A fourth part of the German population are social-democrats. Their programme, laid down at Erfurt in 1891, is purely economic and political; religion is declared to be a private affair. But, in reality, among the German social-democrats only the so-called "scientific socialism," that is, the doctrine of Karl Marx, is considered to be socialism proper, and that doctrine is incompatible not only with the church and the Christian religion, but indeed with every religion. The Marxian system is based on economic materialism in its most pronounced form, and leaves no room for independent spiritual forces and values. Accordingly, we find throughout the books of the German socialist leaders many sentences which predict the certain destruction of all religion. "We do not seek new religious forms, we deny all religion," says the great leader Bebel. And the other socialist leader, Liebknecht, declares that "the Christian religion is the religion of private property and of the respectable classes."

Now to this position of the socialist programme and leaders corresponds the attitude of the millions of German social-democrats, who constitute the overwhelming majority of the German wage-earning class. Religion is a private affair,—that means for most of them: As socialists, we are indifferent to religion and church. Some of the leaders have tried again and again to bring about a secession from the church *en masse*, but they have had little success. The vast majority have their children baptized, and are married in church and buried with Christian rites, and part of them pay church-taxes; but that does not mean that they are friendly at heart. That they do not leave the church is because they are absolutely indifferent, and because it is customary to have religious ceremonies at wedding and funeral; from their inner life religion has disappeared.

But this attitude of indifference pertains only to the great unthinking mass. All socialists who think a little deeper, including the whole socialist literature and press, are not indifferent, but display unbounded hatred of the church. "The church is an institution to stultify the people, the ministers

are fools or hypocrites"; this dogma characterizes the attitude of socialist literature. Science and religion are considered as presenting an irreconcilable contradiction; religion is but the tool of the rich to keep the masses in darkness, the rich themselves do not believe in it. Accordingly, social-democracy has undertaken through a great popular literature and by constant public lectures to enlighten the people, to preach materialism as the result of science, and so to destroy religion and faith forever. Socialist evangelists go from place to place and preach in this sense about religion and church, in socialist meetings the subject is treated at length, and the children are influenced against their religious teachers. The outward result of this agitation can be seen in the withdrawals from the church, which are mostly on the part of social-democrats. The number of social-democrats who ever attend a service on Sunday is almost nil; upon every workingman who goes to church his fellow-workers pour out tremendous scorn. Inwardly, the effect is a horrible pessimism; faith in ideal values, trust in God's help, hope in an eternal life is gone. There remains only the endless hard struggle for existence and in the far background the expectation of a future socialist state, which the present generation will not see, and the benefits of which are purely material. But besides that,—and here we come to the most critical point,—with religious faith moral ideals also vanish. Especially the demoralization of the young has made amazing progress, chastity is considered a ridiculous prudery by girls as well as young men. Morality, like religion, is scoffed at as an illusion, the political struggle instigates the basest passions, the accepted doctrine of the party condemns the best virtues and undermines the most holy institutions—family and fatherland. If the strong power of conscience, which is native to the German people, had not counteracted the party doctrine, this demoralization would have gone much farther. Pastor Göhre, who knows social-democracy most intimately, who has himself been a workingman and now belongs to the social-democratic party, gives this judgment: "The effect of the social agitation has thus far been much less disastrous for the political and economic ideas of the workingmen than for their religious convictions and moral char-

acter. In the destruction of the Christian religion, social-democracy has had its greatest success."

What are the reasons for this sad state of things? The main reason is the materialism of the socialist doctrine. Marx and Engels founded socialism in the years 1840 to 1880, that is to say, in the period when materialism was the predominant philosophy in Germany. Consequently, today, when materialism and theological hypercriticism have lost their place among scholars and students, the lower classes accept as gospels Strauss's *Life of Jesus* and Haeckel's *Riddle of the Universe*. As every spiritual movement comes down to the masses at about the time when it is outgrown among scholars, so it has been with materialism, and it would probably have been so, even if Marx had not made materialism the basis of his system. The attitude of the leaders can be further explained by the fact that by origin the majority of them were Jews who had lost their religion.

But all that can serve to explain only their indifference to the church, not their hatred of it. For this enmity the church itself must bear part of the guilt. During the last centuries the church has not been capable of educating the masses to real religion. It has retained old formulas, and renewed them in the time of reaction, and in so doing has brought it about that those for whom science and philosophy had destroyed the old formulas have lost all religion. In reading the criticisms of the socialists and in discussing religious problems with them, one finds that very few attack religion,—the life in and through God,—what they usually attack is certain dogmas, or alleged historical facts, or the attitude of some ministers. The real experience of faith they have apparently never known at all.

The second mistake of the church was political, and this was perhaps the greater mistake. At the time when Marx worked out his system, the dominant principle in Germany, and especially in Prussia, was "Throne and Altar together against Revolution," the church was used by the government for the support of its reactionary policies. And today the church is still in the main a conservative force; the newspapers friendly to the church are mostly conservative in politics. We have seen the reason for this in the materialistic principles adopted by both liberals

and socialists, and the consequent predominance in church affairs of the conservatives. But the accusation of the social-democrats that the ministers keep the masses down, is no longer justified, for today a very large part of the ministers are imbued with social ideas. As early as 1878 the court-preacher Stöcker founded the Christian Social party. Many ministers and friends of the church joined him; Christian workingmen's societies were started everywhere. But Stöcker was a very conservative man, he tried to solve the social question by paternal methods, and keeping to the orthodox formulas he was not able to bring religion nearer to the modern workingman. It remains, however, his great merit to have stirred the Protestant church and reminded it of its social responsibility. In the eighties Bismarck, and since the nineties Emperor William, both led by distinctly Christian motives, carried through the extensive German labor-legislation, and brought state socialism in Germany farther than it has gone in any other country. But through other governmental measures the socialists were driven further into opposition.

Since the beginning of the nineties, Pastor Friedrich Naumann has made a new attempt to solve the problem of social-democracy. He had formerly been an enthusiastic follower of Stöcker, and with marvellous eloquence had preached to the church and the pastors the duty of solving the social question through active participation in politics. He parted with Stöcker because he saw an obstacle in Stöcker's paternalism and orthodoxy; and he founded the National Social party, with the conviction that the social-democrats could be won for patriotism and the church, if liberalism would vigorously take up social problems and stand firm for labor-unionism. A deeply religious man and an enthusiastic orator, Naumann succeeded in winning many friends of the church, especially the younger pastors, to this new liberalism. In the years 1890 to 1894 there was a wave of social enthusiasm in the German Protestant church comparable with that in the United States at present. But the movement in Germany subsided, and for two reasons. First, Naumann did not succeed in winning over to his party a single socialist. The socialists scoffed at the

social pastor; they do not want to have their programme carried through little by little in a legal way, the theory of the inevitable increase of misery up to the final catastrophe has become with them an absolute dogma. So after four years the National Social party collapsed. Furthermore, Naumann himself has changed. He saw that, given the tremendous growth of our population, the first thing necessary for helping the social need in Germany is a great industrial development, and that this is possible only if Germany consciously adopts imperialistic policies, acquires colonies, and builds a navy. But that led to complications with Christian principles; indeed, Naumann came to the conclusion that politics, whether social or of any other sort, is primarily a struggle for power, and that it is impossible to derive the aims of politics from the Gospel. The Christian religion can put the struggle for power on a higher level, but it cannot solve the present problems.

This change in Naumann, and the failure to make converts from the social-democracy, have diminished the social enthusiasm of the friends of the church; more and more they have come to recognize that equally good Christians may hold very different opinions about the solution of the social question, and that therefore ministers who deal with political questions will necessarily be forced to enter into the struggle of parties. But the laymen justly ask that the ministers shall not be partisans, and so, especially because of the harmful political activity of the Catholic priests through the confessional, the demand has more and more prevailed that ministers shall not discuss politics. The "Christian social" enthusiasm has abated, but it has made the issue clearer, and has shown where the Gospel has its place and where not. The social spirit has at the same time extended itself in the church; in most cities the ministers have formed Christian workingmen's societies, which, with no party standpoint, take up political, social, religious, and educational questions, and in so doing infuse the Christian spirit into the discussion of social problems. The Protestant workingmen's societies have 140,000 members, the Catholic 400,000. Besides, there are two Protestant social congresses, one more conservative, the other more liberal, where ministers and economists

and manufacturers and Christian labor-leaders discuss and promote the solution of social problems. Not only within the church, however, but everywhere in Germany the social spirit, due in great measure to Naumann, is growing; the movement is no longer so enthusiastic as it was fifteen years ago, but it is more solid, sober, and thorough, an idealism which, we may hope, will at last win the victory over social democracy, and so open anew the way to religion for a great class of the people. But it must be confessed that thus far the growth of social-democracy has not been checked by all these movements; the social-democratic party is still increasing, though not in proportion to the increasing number of wage-earners, and more and more people are losing all religion.

The hope of victory must be based chiefly on theoretical considerations. First, materialism is definitely overcome in German philosophy and art, and this rejection of materialism must in time reach the masses. The overcoming of materialism in the laboring class will be a hard struggle, because the whole socialist system is based on materialism, but it will surely be accomplished at last. Germans are always primarily philosophers and thinkers, and in the social-democracy the philosophy of materialism has had a much greater influence than practical political and social doctrines. The German workingman is much more a philosopher than a politician, and in the end he will have to recognize the shallowness of materialism. For many of the best social-democrats even today their doctrine is something like a new religion, it is an ideal, a faith in the final victory of the good cause, and it leads them to the most unselfish devotion. They will learn how poor the world and mankind would be if its religion consisted only of material, economic, and political ideals. We may say already that Marxian socialism has reached its culmination. Although the numbers are growing, and the masses vote down all revision of the doctrine in the party congresses, yet the party will soon be almost like an army without officers, for the best and most intelligent members have revisionistic tendencies. And revisionism means not only the abrogation of the revolutionary principles, but also the abandonment of the materialistic foundation and of the

dogmatic attitude which scorns all idealism, all religion, and the church, as folly and hypocrisy.

III

If our confidence in a revival of religion among socialists is mainly theoretical, we can point out a more concrete basis for hope when we turn to the fourth or liberal group. And the attitude of liberalism is most important for our question, for it is decisive for the future of religion and the church in Germany. To be sure, liberalism comprises today very diverse elements. All those whom we call typically modern are here united,—a great part of the mob of the cities, the modern Jews, the classes who are moved by superficial sentiment, the apostles of immorality. These pseudo-liberals, who form a majority of their group, take much the same attitude to the church as do the socialists, an attitude of indifference or of blind hate. But to the class of modern men, to liberalism, belong as well the creators and representatives of real German culture, artists, professors, literary men, reformers, those whose attitude decides the future. For it is always true that what these men stand for today, will in the future become the common ideas of the people. Because one hundred years ago Goethe and Schiller turned from the church, and because fifty years ago science professed to have refuted religion, therefore today the masses leave the church and the workingmen scoff at religion. And if the men of art and scholarship turn to religion today, within one or two generations the masses will follow, even though no great reformer like Luther appears who can win the whole people by one stroke of genius.

So we come at last to the question which we asked at the beginning. Is the Christian religion possible for the modern man? Is the support of the church compatible with modern culture?

Since the latter part of the eighteenth century, when modern German culture began, the whole life of the educated German has been imbued with a rich culture completely independent of the church. In modern Germany, as nowhere else, all fields of culture have intimately co-operated; classicism, romanticism,

naturalism, impressionism, have put their impress not only on philosophy and literature, painting and music, but also on education, politics, and economics. At present no single new movement seems to be supplanting the old in all fields at once; the characteristic of today is rather that contradictory principles exist together, and often in the same persons. The older tendencies are not completely abolished by the more modern. One element alone seems to be common to all the tendencies of modern culture, the purely negative characteristic of Anti-supernaturalism. A supernaturalistic view of the world was self-evident for the church from its beginning and through the Middle Ages and at the time of the Reformation. By a positive revelation and an absolute miracle God has brought from the outside into the sinful natural world salvation for that part of mankind who with their hearts accept his revelation. After a short period of earthly life these persons will be led to their true home in heaven. This philosophy, which conceives all history as a drama played between heaven and earth, between the supernatural and the natural world, has completely disappeared from our modern thinking. Kant, the leader of modern German philosophy, and Goethe, the hero of modern German art, have destroyed it for the educated part of the German people. The classical German idealists—Kant, Schiller, Goethe, Fichte, Hegel, Schelling—were not atheistic,—on the contrary, most of them were pantheistic, and accepted all reality as a revelation of the divine; yet this idealism was in fundamental ways, above all in its anti-supernaturalism, opposed to what had up to that time passed for Christian religion, and the idealists were very far from the church. Since, according to them, all life and all human relations share in the eternal, they had no need for specific religion. The highest thing in life for Kant was morality; for the others it was rather philosophy, art, or science.

But in the middle of the nineteenth century, after a splendid period of predominance, this classical German idealism collapsed. The idealization and deification of reality appeared unjustifiable—a subjective transgression of the limits of experience, and a stronger feeling for the dark and gloomy aspects of life and the world caused the idea of the whole world as a

realm of reason and a revelation of God to seem a vast illusion. Since the middle of the nineteenth century, natural sciences, positivism, naturalism, have taken the place of idealistic art and philosophy; science no longer tries to understand things from their inner reasons, but only to investigate and order phenomena; art no longer aims to create a new world, but to copy as closely as possible the immediate impression of things; political and private life no longer strive for ideals and for universal harmony, but are a struggle for the physical, economical, and political fundamentals of existence. A new realistic type of culture has arisen, such as was never known in Germany before. The truest representatives of German idealism, Schiller, Fichte, Hegel, are neglected and derided; only Goethe, that universal genius, who in all his idealism had always a marvellously keen sense for real life, has maintained his place as hero, and of Kant only the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the philosophy of the caused phenomenal world, has maintained its acceptance. This realistic culture of the second half of the nineteenth century has made life immensely rich and refined, has not only created a politically united, strong empire, and produced enormous progress in industry and the arts, and in the standard of living, but has also sharpened our eyes for the realities of life, and taught us that to get truth is more important than to idealize things, that life and art are not a play or a toy, but serious hard work. The naturalistic art of poets like Ibsen and Hauptmann and of painters like Liebermann has revealed with inexorable sharpness the intricate complexity of the soul and the cruel mechanism of society, so that today no optimistic phrases or idealistic abstractions can make us overlook the realities of life.

But from the church and religion this realistic culture has departed still more widely than did the pantheistic idealism of the first half of the century. Religion, like metaphysics, can appear to such naturalistic thinking only as a beautiful dream or a foolish illusion. In philosophy agnostic positivism does not allow reflection on God and eternal things; materialism, or, as it calls itself today, monism, treats all psychic life, and so religion, as an accidental product of the causal physical mechanism, and rejects the idea of a personal God as unscientific. The few

thinkers who use the name of God venerate him as mere natural power pervading the world, to which any personal relation is impossible. Concepts like love and grace, faith and trust, are called anthropomorphic. Not a certain form of religion, but religion as such, seems outgrown. The somewhat vague conceptions of a transcendental world and spiritual values are contrary to the whole temper of a realistic age, which through the predominance of natural sciences and technique has come to unbounded admiration for exact empirical facts. Furthermore, the results of modern historical criticism, and the work of Strauss and Baur, have become known to the educated laymen, and have taken away their belief in the trustworthiness of the fundamentals of Christianity. So religion has vanished from the minds of the representatives of the highest modern culture; for many of them art has taken the place of religion, a realistic art which is supposed to be able to satisfy the longings of the soul.

The sad results of naturalism are seen not only in the attitude of the age towards religion, but also in its morality. It is true that a great part of the naturalistic philosophers and artists acknowledge the ideals of truth and goodness and beauty, but only as natural and necessary products of the social evolution of mankind, and therefore as possessing merely relative value. The complete determinism of the age allows no faith in free moral personalities. Moral weakness and cynicism pervade large numbers of the educated; and when in the later eighties and the nineties of the nineteenth century the old optimism in regard to technical and political success gave way to the painful discovery of the inner demoralization and shallowness of life, German culture of the so-called *fin de siècle* really became in many respects a decadent civilization.

All this still exists in German liberalism today. The zealous League of Monists under the leadership of Haeckel still preaches materialism to the people, realistic interests still control many of the educated, the spirit of decadence still produces in arts and literature abundant, and sometimes horrible, fruits, and the Christian religion and Christian morality still find their most dangerous enemies among the men and women of culture.

And yet we are justified in saying that the profoundest men of our time are no longer on the side of the enemies of religion, and that since the end of the nineteenth century naturalism has been continuously declining until it has nearly disappeared among the men of highest education. And what has taken its place? The new spirit is called neo-romanticism, or mysticism, or symbolism; in reality, we must confess that it is not a definite new type of culture, but only a great striving,—but this striving we may fairly call religious. The one great problem of the salvation of the soul, the question: How can the soul find the eternal? has driven all others into the background. The old broad faith in the sufficiency of secular culture is deeply shaken. Men had believed that this faith would make life rich and man great, and it turns out that on the contrary it has made our life small and poor.

As leaders of this modern movement, with its deep striving, may be named three great men, of whom only one is a German, but who have all found their greatest body of disciples in Germany: Ibsen, Tolstoi, Nietzsche. Ibsen was a naturalist in fundamental philosophy, but the problem of the soul in danger of perishing under the standardizing and mechanizing power of culture had laid hold on him, and he tried to solve it, although by purely naturalistic means which led to failure—a complete bankruptcy, of which his last book is the frank confession. Tolstoi has preached with the tremendous force of genius that our realistic culture is absurd and will ruin mankind. He has thereby expressed the dim feeling of thousands, and has attained to enormous influence. But the majority follow him only on his negative side, in his criticism of the present civilization; the way to salvation which he has shown, a radical anarchism of Christian brotherhood, has found few in Germany to accept it. Tolstoi is a John the Baptist, the forerunner, preaching the law and calling the men of his time to repentance.

A far greater influence than that of Ibsen or Tolstoi has been exercised by Nietzsche. He has aroused an interest and enthusiasm, chiefly among the young, which America can scarcely imagine. Although during the last twenty years an immense literature has been written about him, he is still the unsolved

riddle for Germany. In a language whose music enchants every artistic sense, he has preached, as a new Messiah, the great gospel of the superman. He has attacked the Christian religion and Christian morality as the one great fundamental lie which has made our culture sick and decadent; God is dead, sin never existed, truth we do not want, the will of the few to be mighty is alone God and truth and righteousness. This doctrine has caused a widespread agitation and confusion of mind. The decadents, especially the aesthetic and literary youth, have accepted it with enthusiasm, and preached brutal immorality with provoking frankness. Aristocratic tendencies have again come forward, and in many circles have driven out the newer democratic ideas; unbounded individualism, which since the days of romanticism has had a great hold on our people, claims the right to live its own life without restrictions. The "Congregation of Nietzsche," as they call themselves, have undertaken a campaign to overthrow the Christian religion.

So Nietzsche seems to have been a destroyer of Christianity. Yet this is surely not the place which he will take in the history of German thought. Quite the contrary. Nietzsche's philosophical ideas may temporarily confuse the minds of a great part of the educated, but they will soon be outgrown by reason of their own irrationality. Nietzsche was not a philosopher, he was a poet and a prophet, and he has made an end of naturalism in Germany. He saw that there is only one problem in life, the problem of the soul; and his whole life was one great longing after true idealism in contrast to realism and naturalism, his whole thinking was a seeking after God, after holiness, after eternal life. His solutions are, at least theoretically, wrong and confused, and through them he ultimately lost his mind; but his point of view, his attitude towards life, is the great and striking thing in him.

And that question which is the content of Nietzsche's life has deeply penetrated German thought in the years since he first won recognition. Our best books are no longer merely naturalistic, but deal with the fundamental and eternal questions of life. It is an unparalleled thing that a purely theological book like Harnack's *What is Christianity?* should have

five editions in one year. And it is almost unknown in the history of German literature that within a few months a book should find sale to the extent of 150,000 copies, and produce such an immense agitation as did Frenssen's *Hilligenlei*, a book whose only subject is the longing for truth and holiness, and which explicitly contains a life of Christ. Doubtless other causes helped to the great success of that book, and it may be admitted that the treatment of the subject was not at all satisfactory, but the hundreds of criticisms of the book clearly proved how deeply its subject, and in particular the religious aspect of that subject, had stirred German hearts. So it is with other popular modern writers and poets, Björnson, Tolstoi, Maeterlinck, Rosegger, Chamberlain, Lilienkron, Dehmel, who all treat religious questions. Schiller has come more into favor, and of Goethe it is no longer only his middle, and purely humanistic, period that is admired, in which he called himself a decided heathen, but also his later work, which tends much more towards religion and Christianity.

On the other hand, we must say that thus far this seeking is seldom friendly to the church, and that it has not yet reached any positive results which can be called distinctively Christian. Its character is more aesthetic than ethical; satisfaction is sought more from the great artists than from Jesus. The worship of Goethe has truly become religious, but as there are Goethe-congregations, so we find congregations of the followers of Tolstoi, of Nietzsche, of Ibsen, of Klinger, besides "Teutonic" and many other "religions." In one year thirteen such new so-called religions were propounded, all among the educated,—partly pagan, partly mystical, partly theosophical, partly merely aesthetic. Yet some of these new movements, none of which, of course, led to new religious institutions, are decidedly imbued with a deep Christian spirit,—as, for example, the great number of educated persons gathered under the influence of Johannes Muller.

On the whole, we may say that naturalism is outgrown in the best circles of German thinking, but that no distinct new ideal has taken its place. The age is disgusted with mere realistic culture, and is characterized by religious longing, but this long-

ing has not yet found a definite satisfaction. Will it find it in the Christian religion, will the church be able to satisfy it? Two things seem to me to be certain. First, the old orthodox form of Christianity cannot satisfy this longing of the age, for the older supernaturalism is gone forever; all philosophy since Spinoza would have to be annulled, all modern culture would stultify itself, if thought should return to the old supernaturalism. Secondly, the Christian religion stands and falls with the ethical concepts of sin and salvation, that is to say, with at least a relative dualism. Neither immanent idealism, which sees divine revelation in all things, nor naturalism, which knows no other reality than the phenomenal world, is compatible with the Christian religion. Here indeed lies the fundamental antagonism between the Christian religion and modern thought. If the two are to come together, if the religious longing of the present is to find its answer in the Christian religion, modern thought will have to abandon its purely immanent view of the world, that view which either takes God and world as the same thing, or else knows only the world and no God. Modern thinking has brought about its own destruction. The idea of a transcendental world was abandoned, and only then did this present world of immediate reality come into view as a realm of reason and ideals. But that mode of thought could only continue so long as the departed idea of a transcendental world was still casting its brightness upon this mundane scene. When the illusion disappeared, our world displayed its irrationality and meanness. In that aspect naturalism has viewed it. But naturalism has become disgusted with itself. Today men are again longing for eternal values, for a deeper reality and a higher aim of life than this mere immediate world and its happiness can offer. This longing, this incipient faith in an unseen depth of reality, changes the attitude towards religion. Men had before struggled against it as against an outside authority, now they are becoming aware that in the struggle against religion their own souls are at stake. Today, therefore, culture with its immanence and religion with its transcendence must try to come to an understanding. If they do not succeed, modern culture and the Christian church will separate for all time; if they do

succeed, there is a possibility of union. Only a possibility, to be sure; much depends upon whether the church of the future will be broad enough to accept the understanding. For there can be no doubt that it will be something new; a simple resumption of the old supernaturalism would be no solution of the problem. Only a new conception of transcendence, of God, of salvation, can settle it. The future we cannot foresee; if we look at the rigid conservatism of the friends of the church and at the fanatical anti-supernaturalism of the men of culture, we must be very doubtful whether without the appearance of some great creative genius such a change is possible. In Germany today such a man is awaited by many, who find intolerable the present hopeless confusion of ideas and dissolution of the very fundamentals of life.

Meanwhile, many are working steadfastly for a solution,—chiefly students of philosophy and theology,—and of these a word must be said. After the complete breakdown of the Hegelian philosophy in the middle of the nineteenth century theology was in trouble. Philosophy was either materialistic or agnostic or pessimistic or, since the seventies, neo-kantian in a purely critical form; and there seemed to be no room for religion in any of these systems. In this distress Ritschl appeared like a saviour. Taking up Schleiermacher's ideas, he defended the truth of the Christian religion by completely separating religion from culture, and theology from metaphysics, and by basing religion and theology exclusively on practical religious experience and on "value-judgments." He practically swept the whole field of liberal theology in Germany; his ideas were greeted with great enthusiasm by theologians; and today his disciples are still among the foremost of German theological scholars. In the last ten years, however, Ritschlianism has passed more and more into the background. Many have seen that the old problem of the antagonism of religion and modern thought cannot be solved by merely treating them as two independent things, and dividing man into two parts, but that an understanding and reconciliation between the two is absolutely necessary, and in the last fifteen years a new interest has sprung up in the philosophy of religion. This has proceeded

first from the side of the philosophers. The modern movement called "critical idealism," or "the idealism of freedom," cannot be described without a more detailed discussion than can here be given of the difficult epistemological investigations on which it builds. It is based on Kant, yet no longer chiefly on the *Critique of Pure Reason*, but on Kant as a teacher of the realm of freedom which is above the realm of nature. The world of ideals and values, in distinction from the world of causal mechanism, is presented as an independent, personal reality, indeed as the only certain reality. It is far less obscure to us in its existence than is the phenomenal world of nature, and the latter world only becomes definite reality to the degree that it is taken up into the world of ideals. In man both realms meet, the natural, including physical and psychic life, and the ideal; and so in man a struggle arises between freedom and necessity, that struggle which makes human life at once tragic and sublime.

The philosopher Rudolf Eucken has treated this idealism of freedom especially from the religious point of view, and in so doing has called forth a strong movement in theology. In the practical affirmation of the higher spiritual life which enters into our natural world of experience Eucken has seen the essence of religious faith. Religion is possible without faith in a God, as is shown by Buddhism, but religion without the dualism of life is an empty word. The religious problem for Eucken is nothing else than the problem of the transcendental life in us men, the problem of sin and of regeneration by the saving grace of God, who is himself the personal embodiment of the transcendental world. This philosophy seems to give a solution of the antagonism between supernatural religion and the immanent philosophy of modern thought. The old supernaturalism is given up, for the divine is not considered to be outside of the world but to have its reality in the ideals which pervade our world. And yet the dualism so necessary for religion is recognized; the eternal world, which we experience as Personal Spirit, lays hold on man as he is, in the chains of natural necessity, and lifts him up into the realm of freedom.

Whether this new movement in philosophy and theology will

be able to reconcile religion and culture remains to be seen. The main thing is that the problem is clearly recognized, and that the best men are trying to solve it. We are still far removed in Germany from a harmonious religious or Christian culture, and much farther from a culture united with the church. But we have no right to be discouraged. Where truth is sought with unwavering sincerity, where the best men of the church and of all departments of secular thought are working for the solution of one definite task, where so large a part of the people sincerely desire a revival of religion, there we are justified in hoping that the period upon which we are entering will bring nearer the final solution of the antagonism between religion and culture, and so will make a contribution of inestimable value to the religious thought and life of mankind.